John La Rose, Give me your impressions of the possibilities of self determination within society or for the individual.

JLR I was interested in the subject of this conference, Self determination and power, because there is a limit to self determination; determined by genetic inheritance, by geographic . inheritance and social inheritance. In other words we are not volunteerists in the sense that we can do what we like with depend upon ourselves, because ourselves became the bend the genes we how inheritad depends on geography of which we have come, the way our bodies have been located, and the social context of that location. So that is the first point I wish to make. But it is important to see what self determination, means in this sense, How Self determination means that there is an extent to which the individual would like to change his circumstances, and sometimes does, that. In those circumstances the individual has to'in some way 1000CGDE conceive to what Aouso(?) called 'the general will'. That is to Concedo say he cannot act by himself to change things. He must act in concert with others, and because of that, it means that for that collective action to take place and be called upon, there is a impelled forward serious implication that individual self determination, of the kind romantics talk about, does not exist in a real sense, tremendous limitation to it. And that collective action has been part of human existence for quite a long historical period.

First point - Going from that, to what extent are the constraints on self determination? To what extent can they be overcome by the individual do you think? Do you think it is possible without changing the structures of themselves?

Without entering into an organization I think one of the crisis that many people find themselves in today is that they do not feel as individuals that they can do anything to change things, and so they sit at home and feel very depressed, and the way in which people are going to change things in other words to reach any individual self determination is that you have to do something in an organized way with other peoples with whom you are in social relation. And so the whole question of self determination is a collective thing. I mean usually when we talk about self determination I think we are talking about national self determination. And the implication of that is that it is a collective act and so, I mean, I share very much John's point of view that it is a romantic idea to think that an individual can reach a position of self determination in the sort of society we live in. It's a nonsense really.

Is there any specific points we could talk about today.

Q Is there any particular aspect of what Johnson has been saying you want to be done to it?

(MM in put three Roxy)

I didn't want to talk about Chomsky, what I was interested in was the possibilities for people to combine with other people to take charged that action for a circumstances. And I am particularly interested in what people in Scotland can do that can strengthen what people like me are trying to do in London to change our circumstances. One of the things I picked up from being at the conference is that people appearant to have a feeling that they can't do things, which seems to be something to do with the dominance of the Labour party and some of the Cartar Carray Charged

the Communist provided the connot do the they cannot do the din how we can have ures. One of the the something about do all these littles the media. And I

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So that's one of the things I
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dissatisfied.

I think another question that came up in the education workshop yesterday, which had quite a lot of discussion, was the way in which organizations like the Black Parents Movement have really opened up the national quest in Britain, in a way which has really forced everyone to take it in very different and serious ways of I know your contribution yesterday was really quite an important

When you begin to struggle within a society you have to examine that society in ways for you didn't need to examine it before. I knew British society as a person living in the Caribbean; Through studying English history and studying European history, European culture, novels, writers, bietories and so on. But living in a society where you NaQe got to combine with others to change your life and other peoples lives along with yours, which is what self determination means to me meant that you had to take a much more detailed examination of this context of your actions. Given that, in 1976 just after we formed the black parents movement at one of the meetings we had 22 case, /and there we in fighting the police, was called a said to the small audience of some 100 people mostly black, "Look, Britain is a society, that nationalities and ethnic groups, is not what we think it is. There are the English, the Welsh, the Scots and there are us, the West Indians, the Greeks, the Asians and the Pakistani's and Indians. Now within all these groups there Joultural ...? is an internal battle taking place which is called . Now within that we have got to form alliances. Given

. Now within that we have got to form alliances. Given that we understand what Scottish nationalism means, what Welsh nationalism means, what Irish nationalism means, and we obtain got to know something else, which I will be talking about this

evening. But In a nationalist country the revolutionary and like one nationalists, and the conservative bourgeois nationalists, and the conservative bourgeois nationalists in the formation of major nationalists (and to)

the formation of meter colonial oppressive states. Given those circumstances, if we understand that, the kind of combination we can make in British society, means we understood stand the extent of language oppression, the extent of cultural oppression and of economic oppression / It is that that has opened up this question, in the way we have raised it, in British Because in doing that, the question of our language, West Indian Creol language or the formation language/Roxy teaches, researches on that - he teaches about that and written books about it. Now, it meant that what's happened to the Welsh and Welsh language? what's happened to the Scots and Scottish language? what's happened to the Irish and the Celtic languages? What has happened to them? in terms of the cultural revival of these societies developing what Kay Carmichael was talking about today, those myths of creation which are products of the imagination */Because myths are dreams, are ideas of how we have come into existence and how our existence can be changed, is probably our dreamlife, it is not our actual life, but that dreamlife is absolutely important to the Conscourses

of people as to what they really want for themselves both now and in the future. So given, that the suppression of myths of creation, and the fact we have not been week, or part of growing literary consciousness become a suppression of power within these societies have really led to the suppression of the imagination. Not only the cultural imagination but political imagination as well, And given those circumstances it means that they were looked

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upon as suspicion, as inferior, as degreeable but, it is that we have to reconsider and recreate and recover as part of the need that few the new kind of individual subconsciousness and common aspiration.

 $\mathcal{G}_{\mathsf{Now}}$ you were making the point about what Katye Carmichael said about tying it up. ?

TMCD. One of the points that John was making about language, I mean I think that anyone who comes to Glasgow will find that people on the streets are speaking a different language than what you see the on television screens, and in a way that is the medium of conversation and exchange of ideas among a vast number of people in Scotland, yet it hasn't got the recognition that it, I mean I understand that there are kind of society's for the return of the gaelic language but Scots-English has also got an important role to play because it seems to me to be an important language of communication too.

Now there are societies for that, they tend to concentrate on historical versions of it rather than the spoken vernacular as it is most vibrant and exists particularly in Glasgow and the west of Scotland

AH. There's an interesting The situation in London where, for example, in the new London education authority, doing surveys of languages spoken by school pupils, they identified that there were 173 different home languages spoken by school pupils, in London, apart from English.

Now the possibilities John says, about the country being one of pecause as groups, if

opportunity for unity. If you take what I regard as the correct line on that, which is the point of unity is to sit down with a group of young people and to actually acknowledge factually that standard English, which is the language which they are supposed to be born with for literacy or with their education in, and which has national recognition and status, is not normal, because sub Sol e with which get normal, so part of schooling them in the classroom becomes 'what is this language which I am expected to do my literary skills in and is for my exams and writing things down'? How is it come to be the language of power? Why is it the language of power. What is my own language, and how does it work, should be part of the normal curriculum for/schools. // If you are in the Scottish context it would be a different access because in London you have all those varieties. But I still believe from my experience of Scotland that it is the case that an overwhelming mass of Scottish people do not naturally speak standard English as their natural first (book of variet 1/24) language And to behave as if there is just English and that just reading and writing is of the cultural oppression that acknowledging the real language of people with their natural first languages is actually a point of unity between different groups, because we can all but it has to have its place as being a language of a certain Also has utility which everybody can have access to but everybody sought to wave their own language apart from that and have other languages Astudied. But if you take Scot's language, people need to know how hoose, we don't say house, and we say moose, it his a consistent pattern, "How does the grammar work, in Scot's language? Anybod passing through a school in Scotland should know that, - normal grammatical partier

Just as in London without alwocate floaribean family, say their family come from Jamaica should know (a) wellton 2s learning about they should know, - my family come from Jamaica, we use the Jamaican language, this is how its sound system works, it's grammar, is the words we use that are not in the standard English dictionary, and you should know that it is an ald part of schooling and in that self-confidence it encourages people to take on other things in society, like, I can write books about my IAN/R.H Times Literary Suppliment experience using my language. It may not be the used to have is a valid statement T_ always My clients used to say, you know, Me hit him back. What is/interesting about all of this is the persistence of wholes in spitt of language, despite what the BBC has done, and the newspapers have Different kind of news a variety of newspapers persistence of speech patterns as cultural valid statements continues within our societies. It doesn't matter whether it 15 the Soviet Union the oversification has been attempted To the down extent the some os anglification has been at the colonies and Empire. - YOU -News doesn't matter because we/you are part of the colonisation of Britain. The Scot's are part the colonisation of Britain. The Welsh are part of the colonisation of Britain. The Irish are part of the colonisation of Britain. But in processes of questings quistings colonisation there are always Christians, people who, for one reason or another are prepared to commit themselves to the power that exists for any number of reasons. But that is not the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue is that the very process means (transculturation.) It means that cultures relate to each other in one way or another. I am not saying aculturation I gevor twation -that

am saying transculturation, as cultures relate to each other in one way or another and they must have acceptable relationships, that is what I mean by transculturation.

Interestingly enough another discussion that took place yesterday on terms of political action $\ I$ think we have a basis for unity, thiskind of perception out of conception because, for example, when you talk of black people in British society, we were saying yesterday - John was saying A John La Rose was saying and Iain was saying that we have to deal with the question, We have to deal with the question of the white working class in order to achieve our liberation. One of the things that we have to acknowledge is that actually it isn't just black people and white people, it isn't even just the black working class and the white working class as separate Athat we have to acknowledge exist, but it for actually that inside the same person there is a mixture of these things. For example, in London you will get a black person whose family, like mine squ other people from the they come from Africa or African Carribbean, But as a result of growing up in British society we are a combination gas individuals, we are combination people, so in London there are black people who have totally grown up in London who are part of the London working class, who say for example use London language naturally, Jamaican language naturally as in one person. So in fact they overlap the black people that they grew up with. They have the black Carribbean bit of themselves, but they also have the London working class bit which is almost identical with a white person who has grown up in London in the same area, went to the same school, lived in the same estate. And I have been interested for example to do at in a place like Glasgow, to see sometimes interviews with Pakistani people and Chinese people who

were brought up in Glasgow, and they talk in the and at first it is a shock, you know, to see now Ahmed sounds of and they rotally in a Glaswegian way and when that possibility exists, to say what is it about the that is the same, that we combine on, and what is it that is distinctive about us. And part of the self-determination examination is to allow other people to express what is distinctive about themselves out of their own traditions, as well as well as combining with them in areas of common interest. And I think it is a basis for real unsentimental, self interested action to change society.

are accustomed to JLB One more thing I want to say - people that construct the structures in societies and how things change. things they never take into consideration is the fact that all fundamental change takes place on the basis of mass popular movements and the moment of those mass popular movements. You don't need any other party to do it, you don't need a communist party to do it, you don't need a whatever party to do it. These mass popular movements are Chonere what impels students and therefore if you believe that that is a historical possibility And going through British history we can see that that has been the case and mention the chartes movement yesterday. And it really combines historically because in common with A In Britain has been an with the slave revolts taking place in the empire, in the Carribbean, that particular moment, almost the same historical feeling. Yes? there popular movements that impel change make the new the point about constitutional structures, make the new social structures, and that given that we have got confidence that in self determination

we are creating popular movements in the variety of conflicts. cultural Politicals fundamental than believing that the Labour party will do it. I spoke at a conference in Manchester recently and said people must have hope, that is fundamental to change, hope is fundamental to change. But there is no point hoping that the Labour party will do it for us, There are three serious obstacles to that. The first is the confederation of British industry the CBI, the and global finance, and the third, second is the city, global not unimportant is the United States. Britain has behaved more and more as a $\sup_{t=1}^{t} t$ of the United States. So any government in Britain, whether it is Conservative or Labour, faces that serious, difficult transformation & Now given the historical constitutional context in which party politics, electoral party politics works. It is not that which will briggloud the popular movements of that will

© Could I ask you if you want to comment on the keynotes speech from the conference. Chomsky's keynote speech.

I found that a lot of the things that Chomsky was saying were very interesting. He concentrated on how those who have power keep power in the means by which they do it, and that as an exercise was very interesting and some of what he said was said very elegantly. But, the thing which I think that I would be much more interested in, is the means of resistance and the means by which the kind of popular movements that John has been talking about that they have come into existence, they gain power, and the kind of changes that they bring about. And in a way what I think was missing from the keynote speech was any developed conception of

not how those who have power keep it, but how those who don't have power get it. / So this conference is about not just/self determination, but also about power and how to get it and in a sense the function role of people like Chomsky, is really, I see it anyhow if you like stealing with intellectual ground from the people who rule, the elites that run society and challenging their justifications for the way that they are citing. But the much more important task is to actually map out the parts of resistance which have already been chapped and which we are going to have to work on in future. And I think that's what for me was a bit of a disappointment that the keynote speech didn't deal with that, and that's what I think needs to come out of the conference. And I like particularly, I mean, in terms of concrete suggestions, this was something, there was this morning Gus John made an intervention in which he said that he felt one of the most oppresive institutions up and down the land was schools, and what we really need to do is to start a movement to make schools more democratic, and indicated that that movement had to be based upon first and foremost students. And that is the point that we made in the report which we did Murder in the playsround on the Dynoge enquiry in Manchester. It also echoed I think a discussion which we had last $\operatorname{night}_{\gamma}$ in the education field , where the whole business of religious education and religious bigotry in terms of education, discussion in the Scottish context, with this inner sense which we Were talking about anti-racism in England which is very important and you have got a lot of estates in Glasgow, Kids are coming home and asking their mother what is fenian bastard because that's what I got called at school today, and that's not been dealt with. So I think that whole business of democratisation of T meen

schools and dealing with bigotry and so forth is important, and personally I am for all education being secular.

I want to pick up the point that Iain was making about the power and how Chomsky thing about how I would have to get ${\mathcal J}$ and the fact he talked about the power and how they keep power and I wanted to mention something that happened in my own experience that inspired me. In the sixties one of the things I remember was this analysis, the type of analysis that Chomsky didn creates a feeling of, although you wantd recognize it I think as a very acute analysis, it tends to demobilise you because you think, well, if these people are so powerful what can ordinary ANE Or you coult read too way books as they sky people like us do And I remember all you do with so many books kids who can't reach his level of to do with the Portugese colonies and how and they had ac arrogant they were with their massive military force, in dealing reach present societies I have given beside Mozambique and Angola have declared they to have a I mean these guys are determined to have a liberation movement, I level mean what can they do there are illiterate peasants there and criticism. there are very small numbers of them, but those illiterate Guinea peasants were able to defeat a nato power, and cause a revolution But if you have lived through that it inspires you If you press faith in to know that anything is possible, people's capacity to combine together in their own interests to get rid of their present situation, and in the discussion with yesterday I was trying to show people experiences of suburbs in London where had black struggles, and how starting from small groups of people trying to fight against and centain Ining oppresion of the Police and the same thing is happening in the schools. Over say a 10 to 15 year period we arrived at a

situation where there were uprisings in every British city in 1981. But people in the discussion group were talking and I was them aMasking questions! what about these estates all round Glasgow where the depression and poverty is incredible, I mean, worse than black people had in London and yet there seems to be a pacivity in fighting, and people say oh! you know, there is no point in the kird of Struggles I was advocading ons it is cell having constables out ever things that are so very small, micro I But I think / it is there that battles can think they calldit. take place, around, much around the big ideas that we were talking about in the conference about how we change the whole of society. But as we did in our situation, what is the daily oppression that our people are facing and it was the Police and An the schools. In Glasgow it maybe is the Police, Social Security, and how notten where Easterhouse is or something. that is where political activists should be supporting those people to fight, not doing it for them but combining with them to do it.

The wellthink there is another point on that, is the process in OHN demobilisation which is taking place. First of all, the political parties are largely responsible because they say to people 'don't worry organizing yourselves, rely on us, we'll do it for you'. And secondly, which I think, I don't know how far hos been a development in that scheme has developed into Scotland, but in England the process of grants, voluntary organisations, projects, who get all this money from either urban aid or from local authority grants exactly HI where instead of being independent autonomous organisations they ! ace always looking over their shoulder to see when the grantquestioner giving body is approving what they are actually doing and so the reference point for the organization instead of being on the

needs of the organization and the people who are part of it in the local community, the reference point becomes the council chamber and the councillors, who you know you might want to a particular councillor you know, 'piss off, you are in the way, you've got nothing to suggest' but you know that next week you are going to have to get him to support you renew the renewal of grant, and that means that you have got people first of it creates a group of people who go from one voluntary organization to another, where the reference points become /the community association, the tenants association that is paid for the law centres by the council, fand there is a sort of circulation of people there, and there is no independent autonomous mobilisation. Now I think that is a serious critical problem that we face in community organization. I am not saying, because I think there may be similar problems with relation to workplace organization with developments that have taken place with the trade unions.

make a point here. We have always stood up against the incorporation of the black struggles into the CRC's, the Committee Relations Councils. Before we commend the Committee Relations Councils. Before we commend the Committee Relations Councils with kind of colonial office that the black committy in Britain and therefore we are opposed to it politically, theoretically and still are opposed. And therefore we have all this suggester and put forward the radical position there has to be independent, autonomous, radical and revolutionary black political action as you have to be independent, autonomous radical revolutionary, white or other groups of political action. Without that there is no way you can change your circumstances or change the society.

Now what Roxy says is important, what Iain says is important,
Because I remember the Bottle we report, I mean, I knew the
whole of London by the Police stations and the courts we went to
all over the place, and organizing cases. For us a political case
was not a political who have had a case and therefore we were sportice politics That was not a political case, supporting the political in court. I forgot the case.
$\stackrel{ extstyle \wedge}{ extstyle extstyle$
everydayness of oppression, fundamental, the everydayness of
oppression and political organization around the everydayness of
Now hat was look, oppression. Of that left with all those battles from about the
1960's, the 1970's right back to the 1980's eventually to the
intervention that we were able to make in 1980, the Naucoss Mosses sort of rudical
Action Committee. We were the most advanced because of the kind position because of the kind of action we had taken.
of action we had taken. Nothing to do with councils, nothing to
do with CRC's hothing to do with the Labour Party And the
formation of the NewCom Act and the intervention we were able to
make along with thousands of others eventually round the country McCuti the black people action with 20,000 people in the streets for
seven hours. And eventually the ministry of Merseyside to
Heseltine and Heseltine making the point in the Conservative flow we need a block meddleclor. A a
Party Conference \ rapid formation of black middle class
just to hold down the situation. But it is important to
recognize that so far no study has been done to show to what
extent what took place in London between March 2nd and April $\frac{1}{1}$
extent what took place in London between March 2nd and April around the country how widespread that was. Social research Concerns itself with that, that I know through some pure
patterns concerns itself with that, that I know through some pure

And something happened in Dundee.

JLR and Somethy hyppend in Dundle
NOXY Something happened in Crief

And something happened in Dundee. And I went on holiday during that period, I went on holiday with my wife and child to a small village in Devon and discovered that there had been am arising in that small village in Devon also. So so far social research has not yet told us the extent to which MIS knows jand the Special Branch knows, what happened around the country which made Thatcher speachless for the first time at that particular moment. Now it is that what we mean by self determination, and the combination which takes place for the general whim. To change situations for individuals and for individuals combined reformed to form societies. Now I think that the points that have been made here as well as at the conference shows you that it is quite possible in Scotland as it is possible elsewhere in the country to be such individual self determination and combined self determination and we believe that given that possibility this conference will have served a very important purpose.

Could I just add, it is really taking up the point that John's making that people haven't examined the various rebellions that took place in 1981. Or the extent of them, because there is also a popular myth that is put about that they were rebellions of black youth, and again we know from our experience that that was not so, they were popular rebellions of black and white youth and Asian asian youth in city after city after city. And the idea that they would all combine together which they did in certain instances, before the thing was broken up. It really brings me to the point which I think is an important one which is, that what intellectuals can and should be because it seems to me that it is important that the kind of things that Chomsky is doing that people like he continue to do, and I am not against that, but

what is needed is for other people who have the time to do the kind of research into what actually took place in 1981, what patterns of organization and what the patterns of resistance were. And not leave it as something which remains in the archives of Scotland Yard or whoever collects that sort of information if in fact they do collect it, which we don't even know for certains that you throw they structed the place which get lost because people at universities and so forth are looking at the means of retaining power not at the means of resisting it and gaining power for working class communities. Populist games IM power, that's what used to be studied.

Thankoyou.